

Impact Analysis Statement

A Summary Impact Analysis Statement (IAS) must be completed for all regulatory proposals. A Full IAS must also be completed and attached for proposals that have significant impacts. Once completed, the IAS must be published.

Summary IAS

Details

Lead department

Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLG WV)

Name of proposal

Barron Water Management Protocol amendment 2025

Submission type

Summary IAS

Title of related legislative or regulatory instrument

Barron Water Management Protocol (amended 01 December 2025)

Date of issue

12 November 2025

Proposal type

Minor and machinery in nature

The Water Plan (Barron) 2023 (the water plan) is subordinate legislation to the *Water Act 2000* (the Act) established under sections 42 and 47 of the Act. The Water Management Protocol (the protocol) is an implementation document provided under division 5 of the water plan. It provides operational detail for the sustainable management of water resources in the Barron Water Plan area, including parts of the Atherton Tablelands region, as well as the upper reaches of the Walsh and Mitchell Rivers.

As provided for under section 69 of the *Water Act 2000* (the Act) the Chief Executive may amend or replace a protocol at any time. The amendment must be consistent with the water plan outcomes, achieve the objectives stated in the plan, and be developed with adequate consultation with persons affected by the protocol.

During the development of the water plan, stakeholders provided feedback relating to the management of underground water in the Atherton area. The issues required further technical assessments and could not be fully addressed as part of the water plan review process. To address this feedback, minor amendments to the Barron Protocol to ensure the water plan continues to be implemented are required.

The amended protocol will continue to implement announced entitlements for the take of groundwater which is a key strategy required to achieve the outcomes stated in the water plan. Announced entitlements are used to sustainably manage the take of water during dry periods, balance access between water users and protect environmental and cultural needs.

Entitlement volumes are informed by the water levels within selected trigger bores on the department monitoring network. The amendments will allow for improved access and trading in dry times while still maintaining a sustainable and equitable balance for economic, environmental, social and cultural needs.

The department engaged a consultant to undertake a technical review of the adequacy of the groundwater monitoring network and announced entitlement settings. The report found that announced entitlements are a necessary regulation to achieve sustainable use of groundwater. No substantial changes to the water sharing rules were recommended. Instead, the report recommended minor changes which could be made to the network of monitoring bores relied on to inform the current announced entitlements. The proposed amendments include:

- an additional announced entitlement percentage stage (10%) to allow a minimum access level in dry times for all underground water zones
- an additional trigger bore in the Southwest zone where the current rules rely on a single bore
- the replacement of an existing trigger bore in Southwest zone
- other changes to correct minor errors and inconsistency.

Consultation has been undertaken with affected parties, including water licence holders. The proposed amendments are supported by affected parties who have provided a submission.

Based on this assessment, amending the Barron Protocol does not increase costs or the regulatory burden on businesses or the community and is not subject to Regulatory impact Analysis under the Queensland Government Better Regulation Policy (2023). This proposal is machinery and minor in nature as the amendment does not result in a substantive change to regulatory policy or new impacts on business, government or the community.



Bronwyn Blagoev

Director-General, DLGWV

Date: 13 / 11 / 2025